

REMARKS

The Examiner's continued attention to the application is noted with appreciation.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 12, and 25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nicolas. The rejection is traversed, particularly as to the claims as amended.

Applicants have amended the independent claims to specify the core material and clarify that both front and back sheets are affixed to it and stay affixed to it. Note that in all instances Nicolas forms its core material such that no back sheet is retained after removal from a mandrel. See, for example, Fig. 3, in which the support material has no backing after removal from the mould 30.

The back sheet of the invention in conjunction with the front sheet and core material provide thermal stability for the panel and therefore the maintenance of good optical characteristics over a range of ambient temperatures (see page 7, lines 10-21). Nicolas does not teach or suggest such a configuration, and in fact teaches away from it by never employing a backing sheet for its support structure core material. Note that the extended discussion at col. 3, line 15 to col. 4, line 11, provides no teaching as to a backing sheet, nor do the figures or examples mention or show any. Accordingly, the invention as claimed is patentable over Nicolas.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10-16, 18-22, and 24-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Diver and Grossman. The rejection is traversed in view of the attached Rule 132 declaration of co-inventor Michael Reshetnik. The declaration was not earlier presented because it was not believed required, and Applicants appreciate the Examiner's consideration of it at this time.

The Examiner rejected claims 3, 9, 17, and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Diver and Grossman. This rejection is also traversed in view of the attached Rule 132 declaration of co-inventor Michael Reshetnik.

An earnest attempt has been made to respond to each and every ground of rejection advanced by the Examiner, without introduction of new matter or raising new issues. However, should the Examiner

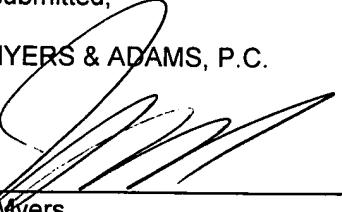
have any queries, suggestions or comments relating to a speedy disposition of the application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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